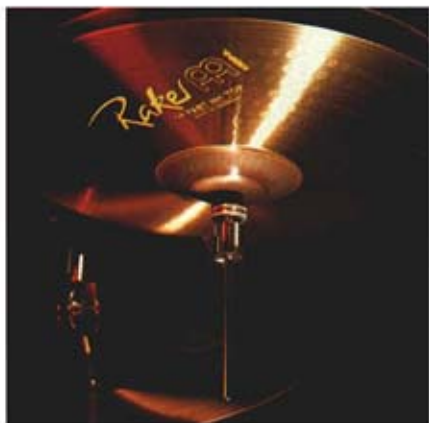


New Cymbals



Meinl Raker

Roland Meinl of Germany has a few different lines of cymbals. (The *Profile* series was reviewed *MD*, June '85.) The *Raker* line was inspired, the company says, by the electronic drum sounds of late. As with all Meinl cymbal lines, the cymbals in the *Raker* series are all tuned to complement one another, giving a complete, definite tonal structure for the series. If you were to go out and purchase a complete setup of *Rakers*, you would have a balanced cymbal set of precise tone intervals. Along the lines of Paiste *Rude* and Sabian *Leopard* cymbals, the *Rakers* have a hammer-dotted, unfinished appearance and hold up well under aggressive playing. Models available include 14" Medium and Heavy hi-hats (with a new *Soundwave* model available in each weight), 16", 17", and 18" Crash and Heavy Crash, 10" Splash, 20" Ride and Heavy Ride, and 21" Ride.

The 14" Heavy hi-hats have a bright, metallic sound, reminding me somewhat of Paiste's 2002 *Sound Edge*. They're quite able to cut through and have a great sounding "chick" when played with the foot. The 16" Heavy Crash also has a brilliant shimmer to it, and I found that it blended in quite well with other manufacturer's cymbals. One nice thing about the cymbals is that you don't have to play hard to make them sound good, because they're pretty dynamic. The 20" Ride has a clean stick sound with an average overtone buildup; the Heavy Ride is somewhat dry.

My favorite *Raker* cymbals seem to be the heavier weights. They all have a clean sound, definitive bell, quick response, and are able to take a bit of punishment. Also, I'm a high-end freak, and the *Raker* line places emphasis on the higher frequencies of the tonal spectrum.

The Meinl *Rakers* are higher pitched and more brilliant than the *Rudes*, and a bit

more "alive" than Zildjian's recently discontinued *Impulse* cymbals. I picked up a *Raker* crash for myself, and have been able to use it in many varied musical situations. The *Rakers* are a quality cymbal line at a not-too-burdensome price. 10" Splash = \$58; 14" Hi-hats = \$150; 16" Heavy Crash = \$100; 17" Crash = \$110; 18" Crash = \$115; 20" Ride = \$130; 21" Ride = \$160.

—Bob Saydlowski, Jr.



Zildjian Z China Boy

Zildjian has recently added some new models to the Z series. These are 18" and 20" Z China Boy cymbals. The idea behind these cymbals was to combine the *China Boy* design (a swooping edge and square bell) with the Z line's computer hammering process. According to Zildjian, "The result is a 'China' cymbal that is louder, more aggressive, more cutting, and more powerful than has ever been available before."

It can be difficult to describe the sound of a cymbal, especially since it is such a subjective thing. However, in trying to be as thorough as possible, I played both the 18" and the 20" Z China Boys alone, in a live situation with a band, and in a "live" videotaped performance for a local cable-television show (which gave me the chance to hear what they sounded like when recorded, and also allowed me to judge their sound within the overall sound of the band). In each of these varied settings, I was able to gain a little insight into the different characteristics of these cymbals.

As Zildjian states, these cymbals are louder and more powerful than other types of Chinas that I have heard, but the overall sound is more pleasing and not as overbearing as the usual "trashy" China sound. They are clearer and more cutting—less of the usual white-noise sound of China types. The length of decay is rela-

tively short, with the 18" lasting a bit longer. I found that I could play busier ride patterns on the 20", and that the 18" worked better for loud punctuations and quarter-note-type ride patterns. Both cymbals worked very well in building the intensity and climaxing through the solo sections of songs I played with the band.

Basically, these are two of the best China cymbals I've heard. They sound great within the context of a rock band. Also, I was knocked out by their recorded sound. I realize that no two Zildjian cymbals are identical, but the basic properties of these cymbals should be similar. If you're thinking about adding a China-type to your set, be sure to check these out! The 18" lists at \$236; the 20" is \$265.

—William F. Miller



Zildjian EFX #1

Zildjian is now producing a line of special effects cymbals called (appropriately) *EFX*. *EFX #1* is the first in the series, and it consists of small, thick, bell-like cymbals available in 8", 10", and 12" sizes. Although they look like splash cymbals, their sound is quite different. Since they are of a heavier weight, the sound they produce is a bit "clangier" than a splash. They are high-pitched, and resemble the sound of cup chimes; they have more of a definite pitch than a normal cymbal.

At soft volumes, the *EFX #1s* have a very clear tone, and they sound good when played with mallets or triangle beaters. (Percussionists should definitely hear these cymbals.) At louder volumes, I found them to be piercing, and their tone was more direct. According to Zildjian, they can be used as a heavy splash cymbal for hard rock players. The 12" could be used in this application, but the 8" and 10" don't really have the spread when played hard. I

preferred them at softer volumes, and they would make a good addition to a cymbal setup to add a more delicate sound. List prices: 8", \$77; 10", \$92; 12", \$107.

—William F. Miller



Zildjian K Custom

Drummers playing in high-volume situations often have to make a choice in terms of cymbal sound. If they want a lot of projection and definition, they need to use heavier cymbals (such as Zildjian's Z series), but those cymbals tend to have a lack of overtones. Drummers who like a lot of overtones—particularly the "trashy" sound that is associated with Ks—have to accept the fact that those cymbals are not the best for cutting through loud volume levels.

But Zildjian has now come up with the K Custom series for people who need projection, but who also want a K type of sound. The cymbal is sort of a cross between a K and a Z. Physically, it looks a lot like a Z, in that it is a heavy cymbal that has been computer hammered, and that has a smooth bell and a *Brilliant* finish. But the hammer marks are not the geometric designs of the Z series; rather, they are smaller, more K-like hammer marks. The result is a cymbal that can be heard through a loud band, but that has a lot of the "trashy" characteristics of a K.

The cymbal is available in three sizes: 16", 18", and 20". According to Zildjian, all three were designed as ride cymbals. The 16" that I tried had a rather high pitch and could be used as a ride in certain situations, but despite what Zildjian says about this being a ride cymbal, it's a killer crash. Hit it hard, and it explodes and then dies almost immediately. It's like having a big, full-bodied splash cymbal.

The 18" sounded the most like a K when I played it—a lot of overtones and spread. But when I asked a friend of mine to play it so that I could hear it from a distance, it didn't have quite as much body as I would have expected. It could also serve as a loud crash cymbal, but I preferred it as a ride.

The 20", in my opinion, is the best at

doing what these cymbals were designed to do. It has a very good blend of definition and overtones, especially when heard from a distance. The bells on all three of these cymbals are clearer than on traditional Ks, with the bell on the 20" being especially nice.

Zildjian has definitely filled a gap with the K Custom cymbals, and they should prove popular with drummers who were raised on the jazz sound of Ks, but who are playing in loud situations that traditional Ks were never meant for. Reportedly, Dave Weckl gave Zildjian a lot of input on the design of these cymbals, and he tested the prototypes in the studio and with the Chick Corea Elektric Band. When musicians—rather than marketing departments—are involved with a new product, the results are usually worthwhile, as is the case here. The 16" lists at \$197; the 18" is \$227; the 20" is \$257.

—Rick Mattingly



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